

The Danube another Berlin?

It was simply in the books and there was nothing the three Western nations could do about it. All but 350 miles of the 1,725-mile Danube now passes under the control of Russia and her stooge nations. On August 13, the voting at the conference on the Danube being held in Belgrade excluded Britain, France and the United States from a voice in the river's navigation administration; as of August 14 the Soviet bloc had not acceded to a single suggestion made by the Western states and had voted, without change of a comma or period, for forty articles of Soviet origin. On August 16, the three Western Powers refused point blank to serve on the drafting committee which will draw up the final agreement, on the ground that they did not want to seem to countenance the blatant bit of railroading. There were many morsels of double-talk throughout the conference: Russia's charge, for example, that the U.S. was seeking part control of the river to further its economic and political penetration into southeastern Europe; and Russia's claim to be a riparian state. But perhaps the most cynical was Mr. Vishinsky's attitude toward the place of the United Nations in the Danubian question. He rejected a British amendment to submit disputes over the Danubian convention to the International Court of Justice on the ground that the Court reflected the composition of the United Nations, which is controlled by a Western majority. To an American suggestion that the preamble of the draft should place peace among the Danubian nations under the aegis of UN, Vishinsky replied: "There is no need for special mention of the United Nations. Devotion to the United Nations should be demonstrated in action and not always in words." And the action that "demonstrates devotion" is the removal of a vital European life-line from free access by free nations. The problem now arises of where we go from here. For 350 miles of the river are now under U.S. control; Russia wants to get us out; we have said that we will stay. Will the Danube be another Berlin?

The Soviet's African window

Putting it very simply, the Soviet Union at present is making a poor job of public relations. Exhibit No. 1 is the New York Consulate case; Exhibit No. 2 is Soviet obstinacy in Berlin, not to speak of Austria; and No. 3 is the Danube Conference. But we get a wrong total picture of the matter if we forget that there are other continuing situations in which the USSR manages to appear in a much more pleasant and reasonable light: for instance, in the meetings of the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations. The Council has been busy with conditions in Africa of late, and has listened to reports from the British-administered trust territory of Tanganyika; from Ruanda-Urundi in the Belgian Congo (cf. review of *The New Congo*, p. 472 of this issue), and

from British Southwest Africa. In each case, the Soviet members of the Council have been quick to appear with very pertinent observations and criticisms. In the Tanganyika report, for instance, they were alert to the low wages and absence of trade-union development and of machinery for collective bargaining in the territory; the lack of facilities for higher education in Tanganyika and Ruanda-Urundi (though Ruanda's excellent mission school, the Groupe Scolaire, would seem to be tops in the secondary field); the possibility that Tanganyika's sensational Groundnut Scheme may be of less benefit to the indigenous peoples than to outsiders; and so on. The joker in these criticisms lies in the questioning attitude taken towards the value of the mission schools, and the further not too carefully hidden purpose of supplanting the schools by a purely secularist educational system managed by the Trusteeship Council. In such a system, the USSR would have a potent and active say (cf. the recent column by J. J. Gilbert, of the NCWC). A peculiarly dangerous factor in the situation of these territories, and their relation to the USSR, lies in the strong encouragement the vicious anti-native policy of the new South African Union Government is giving the USSR's claim and prestige as a self-appointed champion of tropical Africa's indigenous peoples and their aspirations to education and self-government. All of this constitutes an uncomfortable challenge to the colonial and mandatory Powers.

Labor in politics

In the August issue of the *United Automobile Workers* Walter Reuther has pledged himself to the organization of forces "that will work with us to achieve in America a new political alignment." This promise of action is a follow-up of the resolution adopted last March by the UAW's international executive board calling for "the formation, after the 1948 elections, of a genuine progressive party." Henry Steele Commager pointed out the weaknesses of the CIO-PAC "boxscore" of candidates solely on their record on labor issues in a brilliant article in the *New York Times Magazine* for October 20, 1946. He argued that this practice was narrow, inimical to national and hence to labor's long-range interests, and an un-American borrowing from the British parliamentary system. In the United States we have to strike a balance-sheet of each candidate's voting record after studying his position on all issues and weighing the relative importance of these issues. The CIO has broadened its political program since then by making the European Recovery Plan a test of progressivism. In view of the breakdown of party government in Washington (cf. "Irresponsible Parties," *AMERICA*, Aug. 21) the time seems ripe for a realignment of voters into progressive and conservative groups, which is a natural division of

public opinion. Such a realignment will take time to form. But our present confusion makes responsible party government impossible.

More—and right—power to the "Voice"

"A shirt-sleeve contest," is how the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, George V. Allen, tagged the battle of the air-waves that is now stepping up in intensity. "We are in a struggle between two concepts," he continued, meaning the totalitarian and the democratic concepts, "and while the 'Voice of America' will not get into name-calling, we are going to take a stronger line. If we are going to influence anybody we cannot afford to be apologetic when everyone else is shouting boasts." The Voice now beams to critical areas programs that add up to twenty-six and a half hours daily; broadcasts are in twenty-two languages; transcriptions are made for use on local stations abroad. Within Russia alone there is the possibility that as many as three million short-wave listeners hear the Voice, and just recently five additional high-powered transmitters in England acquired by the Voice will double the signals relayed into Russia and the satellite countries. Programs of the type that recent congressional criticism objected to for use in Latin America have been eliminated, and the Voice will come into full power when the State Department takes over the output of all broadcasts, some of which are now being handled by commercial networks. What is highly commendable in the thinking behind the Voice is the fact that the programs will be expressly and consistently objective—life in the United States will not be glamorized, neither will it be debunked. "We are not perfect," said one official, "but we are a lot better than the Russians picture us and we do not intend to let them malign us." Though it is small comfort in times of tension, it is still a fact that the truth carries its own power of conviction and is therefore the best of all propaganda. Voice officials would do well to remember that the great influence and high esteem of religion in American life is a truth that spiritually starved millions behind the iron curtain are thirsting to hear.

The House on Sixty-First Street

It was no magic casement opening on the foam, but a prosaic third-story window in the back of a stodgy brownstone house in New York. To Oksana Stepanova Kosenkina that window opened on liberty or death; and she did not seem to care which, when she jumped through it on the afternoon of August 12. Liberty it was; and to

Mrs. Kosenkina Roosevelt Hospital is a happier place than the Russian Consulate. Jacob M. Lomakin, the Russian Consul, added a final fantastic touch to the incredible melodrama in his "explanation" on August 17: a crowd rushing up Fifth Avenue towards the Consulate and Mrs. Kosenkina's nerves breaking under the strain. This middle-aged school-teacher's leap to freedom is but one in a long series of escapes from behind the iron curtain. Some, like Gouzenko in Canada and Kravchenko in Washington, walked out. Others, from Latvia and Estonia, have braved the Atlantic in craft that would have made Leiv Ericson shudder. The urgency of their flight and the risks they are willing to run are a measure of the terror they are flying from. But those who have got through to freedom are only a handful out of the hundreds of thousands caught between two worlds in the DP camps of Europe. They will not go back to the world of Soviet brutality; and the doors of the West open so slowly and let through so few. What time and money we have spent to keep them in the camps, where their intelligence and skills are wasted, when a humane and generous gesture would be repaid a hundredfold if that intelligence and those skills were put to use here—not to mention the incalculable moral value of a great national act of humanity and charity.

Missions in Scandinavia

Harald, King of Denmark, was baptized by a Frankish monk who bore the strong name of Ansgar. Eleven centuries later, another monk of the same name was consecrated bishop in a ceremony that took place not far from the famed Stone Tower of Newport, Rhode Island, which may have been built by Catholic seafaring sons of Harald. There is more than coincidence here. For between the first Ansgar, great Saint and Apostle of Scandinavia, and the second, Most Rev. Ansgar Knute Nelson, O.S.B., Coadjutor to the Vicar Apostolic of Sweden, lies a complete turn in history. Whether or not Scandinavian Catholics built the Stone Tower (we will leave that to the Harvard scientists now at work at Newport), it is good to recall that once all of Scandinavia was Catholic. St. Ansgar brought the faith to Denmark in the ninth century, and by the middle ages Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland formed an organic part of Christendom. The sad story of the intervening millennium, one of disruption and decay, is just another chapter in Reformation history, but sadder than most, for the counter-Reformation did not reach Scandinavia, and for three centuries Catholic life was wholly dead. Today these attractive lands are mission territory, with fewer Catholics in Sweden, Norway and Finland than one could find in a small American city. So the return of Bishop Ansgar Nelson, Danish convert and American Benedictine, strengthens the bond between our two lands exemplified by the vigorous St. Ansgar's Scandinavian Catholic League of New York. Since 1910 the League and its units have worked in the apostolic spirit of their patron. The *Bulletin*, packed with fascinating information on the Church in Scandinavia, will be sent free to inquirers. Address Mrs. Walter Root, 114-19 201st St., St. Albans 12, N. Y.

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In defense of parity

Within the next six months we shall probably witness an all-out drive against support prices for agricultural commodities. The reason is simple—food prices have gone so high that urban consumers feel the pinch increasingly. They are also aware that the next Congress is no more likely to invoke price supports and rollbacks than was the Eightieth. Amidst the mounting condemnations of farmer “profiteering” there is real need for sobriety in judging the problem. Prices of certain farm commodities are apt to break shortly. A record corn crop is in sight. Potato production increases, especially since the advent of new insecticides. Cotton outlook is so favorable, from the quantitative viewpoint, as to frighten growers. When these and other commodities in surplus supply have to be supported, Uncle Sam, through the Department of Agriculture and the Commodity Credit Corporation, will have a big bill to pay. But we must not forget that the price of non-support would be even greater. In the farm collapse following World War I, and again in the wretched years of depression, aid to poverty-stricken farmers cost many millions. The whole economy suffered from the instability of agriculture. Even a rapid glance at the prices received and paid by farmers over the years shows that deflation, or readjustment if you prefer the term, hits farmers harder than any other major group. So far, during the war and postwar years they have prospered, but the years of inequity outnumber those of good prices. Only during the two World Wars were farm prices more favorable than those the farmers had to pay for their supplies, equipment, interest and taxes. It were short-sighted indeed to try to undermine the parity-support system at a time when agriculture seems to be heading for lower prices and harder going. Readjustment of the parity program is needed to make more allowance for supply and carry-over, but we must not on that pretext destroy the system until a better method of stabilization is found. The Eightieth Congress has made some adjustments already; more are in prospect. But the city dweller, despite his food bills, must remember that farmers have to live also. A support program helps make that possible.

Wool and parity prices

Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney, writing to the *New York Times* on August 14, expresses dissatisfaction with criticisms of statements made by him concerning inflation. The controversy, in which he takes part, focuses attention upon the need for clear thinking if we are to approach the subject of agricultural price supports objectively. Some weeks ago the Western Senator condemned the steel industry for “surrendering to inflation,” by raising prices. Thereupon the *Times* writers, in an editorial and a signed article, pointed out what they regarded as inconsistencies in argumentation. Senator O'Mahoney, they indicated, resented an adjustment in steel prices to meet mounting costs but had no hesitation in asking the highest possible price for the wool clip. Last year, incidentally, the Senator, along with other delegates from wool-growing States, manifested a dis-

treassing lack of insight by endeavoring to push through a high wool tariff at the very time tariff-reduction negotiations were in progress at Geneva. Dubious of U.S. sincerity, some of the nations were on the verge of deserting the ITO ideals. That crisis in foreign economic policy was subsequently resolved by Presidential veto of the wool measure. But the drive for favored legislation continued. In the second session of the Eightieth Congress wool-growers' representatives sought, and secured, support for domestic wool at the 1946 support level (about 42 cents per pound) for the next two years. Now the Senator from Wyoming defends this whole procedure by saying he wants to see the farmer have parity with industrial income. There is much truth in what he says—all too many urban consumers summarily reject the idea of support prices without studying the reasons for their existence. But in the case of wool the story is somewhat different. We are definitely a deficit producing country in that commodity. High protective tariffs or supports only create the illusion of a self-sustaining industry when actually they are driving up the price of wool and discouraging imports from countries in a position to produce more efficiently. The United States supports wool, not out of abundance as is the case with other farm commodities, but because of scarcity. The public generally should know more of these details. Perhaps it would be a good idea, as the Senator suggests in the case of steel, to air the matter thoroughly in public before granting price increases. Then the wool growers would have to defend their dubious position.

Lambeth and Pan-Protestanism

After five weeks of private consultation, the 326 bishops of the Anglican Communion issued on August 18 the resolutions, lengthy committee reports and a superbly written covering letter summarizing the first Lambeth Conference to meet in eighteen years. Press reports emphasized the condemnation of Marxian, atheistic communism, its cruelties, injustice and lying propaganda, as a heresy, deriving from Christianity but its antithesis and contradiction. The resolution, however, concedes that, provided he believes only in Marxist economic interpretation, a Communist can be a practical Christian—a designation applied by the Archbishop of Canterbury to the whole Russian Orthodox Church. Likewise censured were “other forms of economic domination which do not in practice exhibit any clearer recognition of moral law.” In phrases reminiscent of last November's Statement of the Bishops of the Administrative Board of NCWC, the spread of secularism was deplored. Respect for human rights, irrespective of race or color, was demanded, collective control of atomic power, limitation of national sovereignties and support of UN recommended. The growing concern of the State for human welfare was welcomed, but warning was given of the encroachment of the State, especially in the field of education, which endangers human personality. Remarriage of divorced persons remains forbidden; the Committee of Marriage Discipline, however, approved “a private form of prayer and dedication where marriage in

the church is forbidden. Central in the Conference agenda was the theme of church unity. Lambeth, 1908, had declared that "there could be no fulfillment of the divine purpose in any scheme of reunion which did not include the great Latin Church of the West." Lambeth, 1948, represented the triumph of the Pan-Protestant policy in the Anglican Communion, the Conference expressing the hope of an ultimate comprehensive merger with other Protestant denominations and its present gratification at the common-denominator unity of the Church of South India. Significantly, 1948 is the fourth centenary of Cranmer's proposal to Melancthon and Calvin that Protestants should agree on a common confession of faith lest their differences make them appear contemptible in the eyes of the Roman Communion, and urging a general assembly of Protestant divines to be held in England as the safest place.

More aid for refugees

Evidence increases that the postwar refugee problem is far from settled. Recently a plea to members of the United Nations for adoption of a "more understanding" attitude toward Europe's displaced persons came simultaneously from three quarters. UNESCO delegates, meeting at Geneva, were urgently reminded of the plight of refugees in the camps of Germany, Austria and Italy. Norway's delegate, Dr. Hambro, went so far as to say that 200,000 DP's face a prospect of staying permanently in camps because they are either too old for physical work or are incapacitated. He added that DP's are hated and vilified by the Germans, and that absorption into the German economy is unthinkable. A somewhat brighter message came from International Refugee Organization officials at Lake Success. In reporting on the organization's work of the past year, they conceded that, on the whole, progress has been made in resettlement of European DP's. The attitude toward them in various countries has become "less hostile." Nevertheless, the problem remains acute, as the IRO plan to resettle 380,000 refugees during the coming twelve months meets with repeated obstacles. Outstanding are the strict requirements imposed by countries which agreed to open their doors to displaced persons. Most of these countries want farmers, artisans and houseworkers, and are reluctant to admit intellectuals and professional people. This should be remedied by applying Christian principles which will give opportunity to those not so fit for work as others.

More refugees to aid

A new complication in the refugee problem arises out of recent developments in the Middle East. More than 300,000 Arab refugees have been driven out by hostilities in Palestine. These new displaced persons are without food and often without water. Deprived of all medical attention, the unfortunates are threatened with starvation and epidemics. Count Bernadotte, UN Mediator, has already made an urgent appeal to the Security Council, stating that the United Nations, which decreed the partition of Palestine, must also take responsibility for finding an equitable solution. Britain has given a lead by pro-

viding \$400,000 worth of medical supplies and other material indispensable for care of the displaced.

How green is the corn!

In his first national broadcast as Progressive candidate, Henry Wallace proved once again that nonsense cannot be sustained over a long period. It is not surprising, then, that *some* of his remarks were worth while. Unfortunately, the nonsense prevailed. Linking capitalism, communism and Roman Catholicism as the three great international menaces, he singled out international capitalism as the chief foe. Communism and Catholicism, though menaces, are idealistic in their motivation, and therefore Mr. Wallace assures both of these groups that he will not attack them "in terms which breed hate and kindle the sparks of violence." Which is exceedingly kind. Though he makes no mention of them, the International Red Cross as well as the Boy Scouts will presumably share in Mr. Wallace's largess. They will not be attacked. We have no space to indicate to Mr. Wallace the differences which exist between his three "C's." After all, he does not write the speeches: he merely reads them. For his personal amelioration he might pay greater attention to the reputable portion of the press and attempt to assimilate some of the more obvious niceties. He might—and this is daring—he might even write the speeches himself. We feel certain that the sturdy virtues implicit in his rural background would inadvertently protect him from the meshes of confused ideology.

Dead giveaway

Come September 10, you will probably be able to listen to the radio all evening without once being offered \$20,000 and a trip to Honolulu as a reward for identifying correctly the American city mentioned in the title of the movie *Meet Me in St. Louis*. The Federal Communications Commission is taking a dim view of giveaway programs that, in its opinion, have more the character of lotteries than of entertainment. Even before the FCC spoke up, the National Association of Broadcasters, in its new code, effective July 1, had disapproved of programs which induced the radio audience to "listen in hope of reward rather than for the quality of entertainment." Fred Allen's spectacular dive to thirty-eighth place in the Hooper ratings when *Stop the Music* was put on at the same hour was only one instance of an unhealthy trend. It is encouraging that the NAB should have taken action even before the Federal Communications Commission intervened. The radio is one of the most powerful forces molding the cultural life of America; it would be deplorable if its best offerings were to be swamped by a spate of refrigerators, washing-machines and mink coats. There is room, of course, for programs like *Take it or Leave it*, which, when well conducted, provide good entertainment and a good deal more competitive excitement than some heavyweight bouts. But the radio is doing nothing to promote the domestic virtues that are the sheet-anchor of society, when it offers the effortless achievement of fabulous prizes to a people already too enamored of material luxuries.

Washington Front

It probably is safe to draw three conclusions from the communist spy hearings of the last three weeks. First, the country has been awakened to the potential danger presented by home-grown Stalinists in time of emergency. Second, need has been shown for tighter "loyalty" screening to keep subversives out of the Government. Third, the almost grotesque clumsiness of the House Un-American Activities Committee has demonstrated again how headline hunting, political tub-thumping and a cops-and-robbers approach can weaken a worthy investigation.

In the minds of many correspondents who heard witness after witness duck questions on Communist Party membership and related matters, there wasn't much question that there had been wartime espionage here. Numerous accused persons declined even to deny such accusations. They took shelter in a constitutional provision that no one can be forced to testify against himself in a criminal case. They would say nothing that might be incriminating.

Why? If a man was not a Communist and had known nothing of wartime communist activities, it was asked, how could he incriminate himself simply by saying just that? But a flat denial if later proved false by solid evidence would mean perjury; and while J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI weren't called to Capitol Hill to tell what

they knew, there was seemingly well-founded talk that some corroboration could be offered for the spy-ring stories told the House Committee.

Yet there was much evidence that Chairman J. Parnell Thomas' committee had done only a casual job of preparing its case and had failed to do the thorough investigative work that might have made this a more effective disclosure of wartime communist activity. Accusing witnesses were permitted to heave broadside charges against some persons with apparently little prior check-up by the committee as to whether charges were true.

The looseness with which congressional investigations sometimes are run has been a source of concern even among Congressmen. But there has been reluctance to restrict committees because, with all their faults, they often have been invaluable in ferreting out information the public otherwise would not get. They often have been effective gadflies in forcing the executive branch into policies responsive to the public will.

Nobody who has observed the "loyalty" screenings of the executive branch—to cite a case in point—could contend that they have done the best possible job. Keeping Reds out of Washington is scarcely possible when workers can be on the job for months before their background is checked. It ought to be a safe bet that if Thomas E. Dewey comes to Washington in January he'll do something about it. And if he has any time left over he might ask his congressional leaders to give better direction to the House Un-American Activities Committee.

CHARLES LUCEY

Underscorings

So much interest was shown by the six hundred sisters, nearly two hundred priests and three thousand layfolk who attended the Ninth Liturgical Week held in Boston during the first week in August that Archbishop Cushing has established a Liturgical Day to be observed at the Cathedral every month.

► A correspondent sends us an editorial from the *Times* of London about the conflict between the Catholic Church and the Hungarian Government on the secularizing of the schools. Says the editorial:

The dispute is part of a wider conflict which may prove immensely important. In Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary there is a disciplined and coherent Catholic community holding theological and moral convictions diametrically opposed to communism. . . . In all three countries the pattern of the relations of Church and State is remarkably consistent. The Protestant sects are too small and dispersed to offer serious opposition and have in any case a tradition of obedience to the secular authorities, while the Greek Orthodox Church, which is the dominant influence in southeastern Europe, has for too long enjoyed the precarious tolerance of the Soviet Union to emerge now as the spear-point of an anti-communist campaign.

The *Times'* conclusion is that "Catholics in eastern Europe are today, consciously or otherwise, fighting the battle of intellectual freedom."

► Reports from India through NCWC News Service indicate breakers ahead for the Church, particularly in the field of education. After having been promised permission to open a college in Quilon, Travancore, and having purchased the necessary land, Bishop Fernandez was not allowed to build, for the reason that another college (non-Catholic) had already been sanctioned. In the Presidency of Madras (neighboring South Indian state) a proposed law would allow the Government to withdraw its recognition from any private school and take over its land and buildings. Up north, in Pakistan, declared to be a Moslem religious state, Christians are refused representation in the Constituent Assembly, and Christian schools must give instruction in non-Christian religions. Meanwhile, an Inter-Dominion Conference between Pakistan and the Indian Union is drafting an agreement on the protection of minorities.

► "Timeless Rights in Modern Times," a 15c pamphlet just published by the Catholic Association for International Peace (1312 Massachusetts Ave., Washington 5, D. C.) is a study of the NCWC Declaration of Human Rights by the Ethics Committee of CAIP. It discusses the nature and extent of human rights, and compares the NCWC Declaration with similar documents from other sources.

C. K.

Editorials

The roots of Americanism

Herbert Hoover's birthday address, delivered on August 10 in his Iowa birthplace, has received acclaim as the former President's "Testament to the American Idea." Through a long lifetime of public service Mr. Hoover has come to incarnate the political philosophy to which he gave warm personal expression at West Branch.

What are the pillars of this system of thought? They can be summed up in two words: religious individualism. By ascribing human dignity and human freedom to man's divine origin, the exponents of "the American way" succeed in identifying their thinking with that of the Declaration of Independence. All religious-minded Americans are impressed. By stressing individualism and personal freedom, now on the defensive against Soviet attacks, Mr. Hoover makes a strong appeal to many groups: most Protestants, whose theology is individualistic; most American business and professional men, whose economic and legal prepossessions are individualistic by habit and personal preference; and a wide assortment of defenders of academic freedom, freedom of the press, freedom of speech and freedom of artistic expression—all who rally to the flag at the cry of "censorship."

Many people brush off "Hooverism" as simply inept. But the tradition Mr. Hoover represents is respectable. It has a long history and can lay claim to impressive accomplishments: "This country grew great on ideas like those." No one can deny that we have operated on them during long periods of national growth.

But does this individualism, even rooted in religious belief, deserve to be labeled "the American idea"? Can you classify George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, James Wilson and many other shapers of our institutions among the rooters for this tradition? The answer must be negative.

Our political system is not the child of Mr. Hoover's Quaker ancestry or John Milton's abhorrence of authority. Anyone who wishes to take the trouble will find that our early statesmen cited Jean Jacques Burlamaqui as often as any writer, and that Burlamaqui laid great stress on what he called "the principle of sociality."

A second question, which is even more searching, is whether individualism, appearing in a religious garb, is a sound political and social philosophy. Catholics should know that it is not. We are neither collectivists nor exaggerated individualists. We maintain that man has been designed by his Creator for life in society. The State has divine authority, arising out of its obligation to regulate social life to whatever extent is necessary for the common welfare. St. Paul upheld this authority in Chapter XIII of his Epistle to the Romans.

Individualism, when subordinated to higher principles,

is fruitful. Torn out of its context of higher principles it led to the denuding of our forests, to the exhaustion of our mines (which Hamilton thought should be government-owned), and to the emptying of our oil reserves. It produced an intolerable inequality of property issuing in bitter class consciousness and social strife, the breeding ground of communism.

Over one hundred years ago we gave it up as an exclusive standard in the field of education. Gradually it had to give way to social realities in other sectors of our economy. Only a peaceful political revolution, born of the collapse of individualism itself, was able to break down the barriers it threw in the paths of social security, the public regulation of labor relations and a non-political tariff policy. Individualism alone cannot meet our housing needs or our health needs.

The worst danger of one-sided concern for freedom from government is that the social disorganization to which it paves the way accelerates the movement towards collectivism as a remedy. We can avoid both pitfalls if we clarify our concepts of what is truly American and keep our social adjustments within the sound framework of traditional and workable Americanism.

Italy's comeback

One of the most heartening signs in Western Europe today is the gallant fight Italy is putting up for her rebuilding and against her Communists. The de Gasperi Government, once scorned as a weak sister, has not only weathered the communist threat at the polls, near-insurrection at the shooting of communist leader Togliatti, and numerous communist challenges in the legislature; it has embarked on a social reconstruction program that is reducing to actual practice the promises made when the voters were being wooed.

Latest in these realistic and forward-looking steps was taken on Aug. 7 when the Government determined to use funds raised from the sale of European Recovery Program aid to provide employment for hundreds of thousands in such fields as agriculture, public works, land and ocean transport, the tourist business and the steel industry. The order of importance assigned in these fields shows that Italy is seriously tackling her big problem, that of agrarian reform. In addition, steps have been taken to reduce taxes on new homes for those with low incomes.

This all marks a fine advance in Italy's social thinking and, as if to underline the trend still more unmistakably, there comes a program adopted by the Catholic priests of the archdiocese of Milan. Insisting on the urgency of more intense social action by the clergy, the priests adopted these points:

1. In an effort to form a right conscience in Catholics, priests should actively participate and assume responsibility in trade union activities.

2. The development of locals of the Catholic Association of Italian Workmen (ACLI) should be stimulated, even in the form of parish units and in the smallest factories.

3. Groups of priests should be formed who are freed from parish duties and who dedicate themselves to the spiritual direction of ACLI members.

4. In preaching and in their pastoral care priests should emphasize Christian social teachings regarding the needs of the worker: his rights to work, a home, family wage and social provisions for the future.

5. This intense social activity should be implemented in civic committees on which ACLI should be represented.

With the state committed to social reform and actually embarked on it, with the clergy playing a larger part in maturing the social thinking of the laity, the sun of social justice is brighter now in Italy than ever. There is, of course, the constant threat of communist trouble. On August 4, Minister of the Interior Mario Scelba went so far as to predict an imminent armed communist revolt. But the spread of Christian social justice will wash from under the Communists' feet any ground for revolt. If the Communists can be held in leash for a time, time itself will be against them, for as social sanity gains, Communists always lose.

Safe at home

Few earthly pilgrimages can match that of George Herman Ruth for excitement, fame and affluence. When it came to a premature end from the curse of cancer on Monday evening, August 16, at Memorial Hospital in New York, the entire nation grieved. He was everybody's friend. If he ever entertained hard feelings towards one of his fellows, they did not last. He was incapable of malice.

Babe Ruth was not an orphan. Reared above his father's saloon in Baltimore, he chewed tobacco at seven and developed the symptoms of what he himself styled delinquency. His parents placed him in St. Mary's Industrial School, run by the Xaverian Brothers, in 1902.

During school hours he was being trained as a tailor and shirt-maker. Outside of class he caught the eye of Brother Benedict, himself an ardent baseball enthusiast. By the time he was nineteen, his tutor saw that young Ruth could make his living on the diamond, and recommended him to his friend, the late Jack Dunn, owner of the Baltimore Orioles. That was in 1914. He was sold that same summer to the Boston Red Sox. In 1918, as a pitcher and pinch-hitter, Ruth won two games in the World Series and hammered out eleven home runs. The next year he cracked out twenty-nine homers, mostly as an outfielder. In 1920 he went to the New York Yankees, for whom he established the major league record of sixty circuit clouts in 1927.

Fame and money tried his character and he had to be disciplined twice for off-the-field conduct. But he learned his lesson, with the aid of a breakdown in health, and

from 1926 on settled down. When his first wife, from whom he had been estranged, died, he married again. The Ruths had two adopted children.

In his later years he spent himself tirelessly in visiting children in hospitals and building up recreation programs for the underprivileged.

The Rev. Thomas H. Kaufman, O.P., of Providence College, who had given him the Last Sacraments on July 21, was present at his death. "The Babe died a beautiful death," observed Fr. Kaufman, deeply moved; "he said his prayers and lapsed into sleep." The lessons he had learned from the Brothers, to whom he had always credited his career, held up through the end.

In the Requiem Mass the Church sings: "For Thy faithful, Lord, life is changed, not taken away." Our prayers, more effective than our praise, will be with him in his new life. May he quickly join the ranks of God's holy athletes in "the house that God built."

Spy trials: American-Canadian

Said U. S. Secretary of Defense Forrestal to Brooke Claxton, Canadian Defense Minister: "You have an Official Secrets Act, have you not?" "Yes," replied Mr. Claxton, according to press reports of August 16, "that's the one we used in order to get our Russian spies."

Could we have "gotten" our own Russian spies if such an Act had been on our statute books during the session of the New York Grand Jury, instead of the antiquated Espionage Act of 1917? Could we then have indicted those whom Elizabeth Bentley accused in such circumstantial and convincing detail? A study of her testimony in the light of the Official Secrets Act and the Report of the Royal Commissioners would convince anyone, we believe, that most of those who figured in the Thomas Committee hearings would have been indicted and indeed convicted long ere now.

The Canadian law seems to have been tailored to the present situation here. By comparison, our own espionage law seems as anachronistic as an arquebus. Ours was drafted in the days when war was war and peace was peace, and honest men had not dreamed of the "undeclared war," waged by a foreign Power through agents recruited among the citizenry of its "enemy" and insinuated into high positions of public trust. Our espionage law works reasonably well in time of war; it is pathetically inadequate in that twilight time we are now doomed to dwell in. It is generally agreed that it is almost impossible, in "peacetime," to secure an indictment for espionage under our present law. The Canadians are more realistic. The Official Secrets Act "is not limited to the existence of war."

Nor is it necessary to prove intent, as it is under the first section of our law. "Despite its apparent severity," said the N. Y. *Herald Tribune* editorially August 17, "the existing law requires proof of intent to injure the United States, or communicate secrets to foreign Powers—proof which it is almost impossible to secure." Under the Official Secrets Act a person is liable who, having information obtained by virtue of his official position, "uses it

for the benefit of any foreign Power or in any other manner prejudicial to the safety or interests of the State." Miss Willsher, one of those convicted under the Act, testified that "she thought she was passing on secret information for the guidance of the National Executive of the Communist Party of Canada"! So far from making it necessary to prove intent, "the people of Canada," in the words of the Spy Report, "in self-protection have shifted the burden of proof from the State to the accused; he must establish his innocence to the reasonable satisfaction of the tribunal. . . ." Apropos of this revolutionary provision, and the others we have mentioned, we may cite Arthur Krock's remark in the *New York Times* for August 17 about "disloyalties (of some U. S. officials) which cannot be established in the Anglo-Saxon courts of law." As a matter of fact, the Official Secrets Act overturns more than one cherished tradition of Anglo-Saxon law. For example, if it were on our books, the accused could not have taken refuge in silence under the protection of the Fifth Amendment. The Act empowers the Commissioners, "to compel a witness to speak, and to impose sanctions in case of refusal."

The Department of Justice is reported to be preparing a bill which would include a few features of the Canadian legislation. It would make it a felony even to possess classified material, or to disclose national defense information, regardless of whether there was intent. Unquestionably, such provisions would strengthen our present law; but would they enable it to cover the unique situation which the current investigations are disclosing? The answer must be determined without delay. Perhaps it is too much to expect of the Thomas Committee two months before the election; but we could almost forgive its dangerous meddling in the uncompleted work of the New York Grand Jury if, on the basis of its findings, it were to recommend adequate revision of our Espionage Act of 1917. To suggest such amendment of existing laws is, we understand, one of the chief reasons for the existence of such committees.

Progress toward an ITO

International cooperation in fostering world trade becomes more essential than ever. A recent U. S. economic report, made public on August 16, laid stress on the pattern of decreasing trade which characterized 1947 and the early months of the present year. World production, it seems, is today 10 to 15 per cent above pre-war, whereas international exchange of goods tends to drop below pre-war levels. This means that international commerce, for lack of dollars or because of mounting barriers, does not keep pace with efforts at reconstruction.

Should such a trend continue, we may well see a revival of such misplaced policies of self-sufficiency and high tariff walls as were adopted by many countries following World War I. Now, as then, that in turn would mean progressive weakening of political solidarity and the aggravation of economic ills, both nationally and internationally. Self-defeating autarky of the type witnessed in pre-war Italy and Germany would be with us

again, while exporting countries like the United States would vainly endeavor to sell abroad without buying in return.

To forestall the recurrence of that state of affairs, plans for an International Trade Organization were advanced at an early date. Significantly, ITO's chief sponsor was the very United States whose narrow policies in the 'twenties and early 'thirties helped bring world commerce practically to a standstill. Our economic thinking, as a nation, has appreciably advanced in the interim.

The new U. S. trade policy, long a-growing and viewed approvingly by economists in other nations, represents the extension to world circles of the reciprocal agreements program sponsored by Cordell Hull on behalf of better inter-American relations. First authorized by Congress on June 12, 1934, that program was renewed in 1937, 1940, 1943 and 1945. In 1948, however, the renewal was for a one-year period only, with some unfortunate modifications restricting the negotiating power of the executive branch.

Despite this momentary glance backward in the direction of economic nationalism, our long-term commitment on behalf of liberalized world trade is too great to admit of permanent reversal. Today, successful U. S. leadership in world affairs is closely tied to a continued trade policy such as that espoused for the past fourteen years. Unless we default on our leadership obligations, approval by the U. S. of the ITO objective of lowered trade barriers is a foregone conclusion.

Currently the executive committee of the Interim Commission of the ITO is meeting at Geneva to discuss progress since the charter was signed last March at Havana by delegates of 54 nations. The Organization itself cannot come into existence or hold its first conference until the requisite number of national legislatures ratify the Havana document. The present Geneva meeting serves as a reminder that the U. S. is a major delinquent. In view of our enlightened sponsorship of freer world trade, we cannot be proud of this failure to ratify.

More significant still, in the march toward an international mechanism for promoting equitable trade relations, is the meeting at Geneva of signatories to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. The Agreement was signed last fall after months of negotiation. Now twenty-two of the twenty-three Contracting Parties, as they are called, gather to plan reciprocal trade agreements even broader than those originally negotiated.

As the Contracting Parties, among whom is listed the United States, proceed with negotiations, thoughtful men will ponder the warnings of world trade decline. They cannot fail to see that cooperation in this area is just as important as in strictly political affairs. In fact, without international economic cooperation peace is impossible, and increasingly so as limited world resources are sought for utilization by ever larger numbers of people. The United States, along with the world, needs to learn that the era of colonial exploitation and dollar diplomacy is dead. Let it be buried with the past as we come to understand that undue restrictions on exchange of goods are not the way to peace.

The Americas meet for social action

John Parr

With the close of the Ninth International Conference of American States at Bogotá in May of this year, it was apparent that the governments of the western hemisphere intended to do little about the solution of the social problems of the Americas. Although several rhetorical and pious aspirations were voiced in behalf of social justice, no program was devised for carrying these over into the realm of practice. The economic and social preoccupation of the delegates was primarily with the question of American capital, its investment in Central and South America, and the desires of the Latin-American governments in this respect. A tremendous cleavage was revealed between the desires of the latter for capital and the unwillingness of the United States to pour money into the republics to the south.

In any case, those who have devoted time to the study of Latin-American social problems realize that the presence of American capital is not necessarily a solution to the pressing social needs of the peoples of these republics. In the countries where American capital has found easy going—Venezuela, for example—the people have benefited little. A small group of politicians and leading families have been enriched but the great masses continue in a condition a good deal less than desirable. It is therefore necessary for some other agency to attempt to solve these problems, since the political organizations have abdicated their responsibilities in this matter.

For some time a small group of Catholic Social Action leaders in the western hemisphere have given considerable thought to this situation and have finally decided that the only solution lies in a direct application of the Christian social principles expressed in the encyclicals of the modern Popes. In 1942 these leaders convened in Washington, D. C., in the first Inter-American Social Seminar, to discuss their problems and to learn what was being done in each country and what could be done. No other meeting was held until 1946, when the Second Inter-American Catholic Seminar on Social Studies was called in Havana, Cuba. The most important achievement of this meeting was the decision to form an Inter-American Office of Catholic Social Action which would look forward to future inter-American meetings and to regional and national meetings for the advancement of Catholic social teaching in each one of the countries and in all.

Accordingly, an organizing committee was named under the chairmanship of Richard Pattee of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, which had sponsored the Havana meeting jointly with Cuban Catholic Action. A provisional constitution was written, and the approval of the members of the committee was obtained. The organizing secretariat then solicited memberships in the organization, which had by then acquired the title of the Inter-

John Parr, reporting for the Inter-American Bureau of NCWC at the first congress of the Inter-American Catholic Social Action Confederation in Rio this month, writes from Chile that he has been stopping at all the capitals along the way to talk to other delegates.

American Catholic Social Action Confederation. After some twenty-one republics and colonial dependencies had indicated their adherence to the constitution of the Confederation, it was decided that the time was propitious to call a meeting of the Confederation and to set about making it an effective entity.

Happily, an invitation was received from the Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, Cardinal Camara, to hold the first congress in that city. The meeting was called for August 22, and practically all of the political units of the western hemisphere, members and non-members alike, indicated their intention of being represented at this important inter-American gathering.



Apart from the essential matters of organization, the meeting at Rio will consider some of the basic problems of social injustice in each country and practical methods of solution. But most important will be the creation by the Confederation of a permanent secretariat,

which will be at the service of the members of the Confederation for information and assistance. It is expected that this office will launch a program of publications and distribution of technical information that will be invaluable to those who are setting up social-action activities in the various countries.

The program is an ambitious one, but there will be no attempt to create a new social world overnight. The aim is to work little by little but always in the right direction.

The reader may well ask what reason there is for believing that such a practical program can be achieved. In answer, one can point to several successful social-action programs in South America. For example, in Colombia the Coordinación Nacional de Acción Social Católica has been very successful under the direction of Father Vicente Andrade and the Jesuits of the Universidad Javeriana. Two national groups of workers have been organized—rural laborers in FANAL and industrial employees in the UTC—and these organizations are increasing daily in size and effectiveness.

The Colombian delegates to the congress in Rio can be of tremendous help to the Venezuelans, who are without any central organization for social action. Such able young leaders as Rafael Caldera and Aristides Calvani have had to pursue their Christian social ideas through a political party known as COPEI. A united social-action organism is seriously needed in Venezuela, and the Confederation will be able to assist in this project.

Ecuador has begun its program of social action on a small scale, but it is growing and can progress further

with the assistance of the Confederation. Both Fr. Arsenio Torres and Pedro Velasco Ibarra are doing outstanding work in organizing syndicates among the Indians and others. Bolivia has entered upon a program of social action under the splendid leadership of Raimundo Gregori in Cochabamba. With the assistance of the American Maryknoll Fathers and several capable Catholic laymen, he has organized four syndicates among the Indians who work on the haciendas under near-feudal circumstances.

Again, in Peru, at the instigation of and with the enthusiastic support of Cardinal Guevara, a group of young men has organized a JOC unit which will form the basis of a social-action organization already envisioned. In Chile, an economic-social secretariat has been formed as a part of Catholic Action under the leadership of Bishop Salinas.

All these activities and many more indicate that there is a fertile field for the development of Catholic social action in the western hemisphere. There are many obstacles to be overcome, but these can best be dealt with by means of the unity of a non-political organization dedicated to the principles of Christ and with no aim but that of the welfare of the human being.

Communism has been able to make tremendous inroads in various parts of the American hemisphere; and the reason for its success has been the fertile ground it has found in the depressed conditions of the masses of the people. These conditions must be corrected before any satisfactory program against communism can be prosecuted. It is not sufficient to issue a declaration against communism, as did the delegates at Bogotá. Such declarations merely provide amusement for the Politburo, since those gentlemen are in possession of a doctrine which has the deceitful appearance of a positive answer to the ills of the down-trodden and under-privileged victims of social injustice. That doctrine can be combated only by another doctrine with genuine concern for the physical and spiritual well-being of mankind. Such a doctrine is the heritage of Catholic Christians everywhere, whether they are aware of it or not. It is the job of the Inter-American Catholic Social Action Confederation to make Catholics of the western hemisphere aware of their heritage and to show them what the practical application of it means.

For a hundred years the nations of this hemisphere have sought a basis for accord, unity and common action, with varying degrees of success. After all this time, there is still in Latin America a feeling of resentment against the great North American republic; and in the United States there still persists a spirit of distrust in respect to the South American nations. Certainly a great deal of progress has been made, and the recent charter of the Organization of American States is practical evidence of that progress. But there is still absent that great accord which will remove the sentiments of distrust and resentment.

The Catholics of the United States and their brothers to the south have one great basis for cooperation and understanding which is not possessed by the political organ-

izations. That is their Catholicism. Despite the fact that external manifestations of their faith may differ, the North American Catholic finds himself removed from the category of "stranger" when he meets the Catholic traditions of the South American countries. Why not use this great unifying factor for promoting the aims of inter-Americanism?

As a unified front in the face of communism and as a basis for inter-American accord, the Inter American Catholic Social Action Confederation presents a splendid opportunity to the Catholics of the western hemisphere to make an outstanding contribution to the solution of the problems of the times and towards the creation of a lasting peace. For this reason, it may well be that the first congress of the Confederation in Rio de Janeiro this month is a far more important meeting than that held in Bogotá in the spring of this year.

Moscow Patriarchate's 500th year

Edward Duff, S.J.

Glory, anguish and all-too-human subservience to secular power have been the history of the Russian Orthodox Church, the 500th anniversary of whose independence was celebrated by a Pan-Orthodox Conference at Moscow from July 8 to 18.

It was in 1448 that the Russian clergy, ignoring the Patriarch of Constantinople, elected Bishop Jonas Metropolitan of Moscow. The Union of Florence, which it was hoped would heal the schism between East and West, was rejected by the Grand Duke of Moscow and the Russian bishops; the Constantinople-appointed Metropolitan Isidore, who accepted the Union, was repudiated; and the assertion of Moscow as the Third Rome began.

Made an ecclesiastical instrument of czarist policy by Peter the Great, the Russian Church suffered the full fury of the revolution. Deprived of all protection of civil law, its Patriarch Tikhon imprisoned by the Soviet authorities in the early 1920's, the Orthodox Church endeavored persistently to come to terms with the new atheistic regime. An encyclical letter of Patriarch Sergei, July 27, 1927, invited the entire Orthodox Church to declare unconditional fidelity to the Soviet power. Unconditional persecution was the reply, with the League of the Militant Godless increasing its activities and the forced-labor camps filling with captured priests. The following year saw the generalized campaign of closing churches, destruction of icons and enforced work on Sundays. When, on Christmas Day, 1929, the militant atheists organized the monstrous procession through Moscow's principal streets, spitting on crucifixes and reviling the Virgin Mary, Pope Pius XI called for reparation from the children of the world for such insults to God. The Patriarch, who had preserved a discreet silence, upbraided the Pope for his interference.

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The nazi attack changed the fortunes of the Orthodox, transporting the Patriarch from a flat to a palace. For the holy war of the Soviet fatherland, the Russian Orthodox Church collected eight million rubles to equip the Dmitri Donskoy Brigade. It was inevitable that *Izvestia* should report on September 5, 1943: "The Head of the Government viewed sympathetically the proposition and indicated that there was no obstacle on the part of the Government." The proposition was a request made by Sergei, who was allowed an audience with Stalin, that the patriarchate be restored. It was. As successor to Sergei, Patriarch Alexei has dutifully belabored the "war-mongering" Western Powers, berated the "fascist" Catholic Church and extolled "the God-sent Leader, Stalin."

At the official opening of the celebration in the Sokolniki Cathedral on July 8, Georgi Karpov, Chairman of the Committee for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Council of Ministers, welcomed the delegates to what *Il Quotidiano* of Rome neatly called a "religious Cominform in the service of atheistic imperialism." With diplomatic blandness Mr. Karpov declared:

The Soviet Government, which was informed through Patriarch Alexei of the desire of the Russian Orthodox Church to invite the representatives of other Orthodox Churches to the jubilee celebrations, was well disposed to this and provided every opportunity for communion between the Orthodox Churches.

With becoming gratitude, the representatives of the Orthodox Churches of Rumania and Bulgaria enthusiastically supported the nomination of Alexius to the leading role in the matter of achieving a closer union among Orthodox Churches throughout the world. The appointment of new heads of the Orthodox Churches in Poland and Czechoslovakia who acknowledge the supremacy of Alexius, and the excommunication of the Russian Orthodox bishops and clergy in America who refuse to conform, are doubtless conducive to achieving this closer union.

American delegates to the Conference were Archbishop Makarius of Brooklyn; Father Joseph Zvonchik of St. Nicholas Cathedral, New York; and Father Alexander Prisadsky of Berkeley, California. Present as the first important figure from outside the Russian zone of influence was the majestic Archbishop Damaskinos of Athens, curiously omitted from the list of delegates in the *USSR Information Bulletin*. The letter inviting him imprudently adverted to "the sad events in Greece," about which "the conscience of the Russian Orthodox Church does not allow it to remain silent longer."

The reply of the Greek Archbishop, reprinted in the *Osservatore Romano* of July 15, was forthright, and was unanimously approved by the Holy Synod and the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church of Greece. "It seems that the bitter truth has not found ways and means of overcoming the high walls which surround you or of reaching your Christian soul," the letter declared. Describing

the brutalities of "a small but dynamic and well-organized minority [which] has found the support of the neighboring countries," the Archbishop compares the suffering of the innocent Greeks to the persecutions under the Turkish sultans. Three general amnesties offered by the Government went unaccepted; the efforts of the Church for peace and reconciliation were spurned "because the leaders of the partisans are fanatical believers in materialism and persecutors of the Christian religion." "In this respect," the Greek Archbishop made bold to remind the Moscow prelate, "they are like those whom your Beatitude has known for a long time, and whom we in Greece have also come to know." Like that "God-sent Leader, Stalin," perhaps.

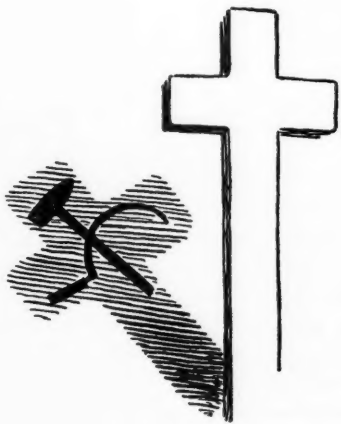
Texts of the resolutions of the Conference were not available from any Soviet source in New York a month after the conclusion of the celebration. Resolutions were passed, it is known, on four topics: on the policies of the Vatican, on the Protestant Ecumenical Movement, on the validity of Anglican Orders, and on the adoption of the Gregorian calendar. According to Tass, the official Soviet news agency, the unanimous resolution condemning the Papacy as the "center of international fascism" recognized the distinction, dear to American anti-Catholic journals, between "the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Catholic Church, dominated by the Pope in Rome, and the masses of the faithful."

The Ecumenical Movement, because of its universal character, was repudiated as "imperialistic," and an invitation to attend the Assembly of the World Council of Churches was unanimously rejected. Rebuffed was Arch-

bishop Germanos, Exarch of the Patriarch of Constantinople for Western Europe, and one of the five co-chairmen of the World Council. After attending the opening of the Lambeth Conference of the churches of the Anglican communion, the Archbishop had gone on to Moscow. A message of greeting from the Anglican bishops to the Patriarch of Moscow may not have increased his welcome. The only former holder of the See of Moscow mentioned in the letter was St. Philip, who won a martyr's crown by his resistance to Ivan the Terrible, the czar currently hailed by the Bolsheviks as one of their precursors.

Though unaccommodating in its intransigent refusal to accept the validity of Anglican Orders, the Moscow Conference, it is reported, decided to establish close relations with Anglican and Protestant churches throughout the world, since, in the opinion of the patriarch and exarchs, these churches follow canons and rites similar to those of Orthodoxy.

Unmentioned in reports of the Pan-Orthodox Conference is any reaction to the revival of anti-religious propaganda in the Soviet Union. *Pravda* disclosed on June 29 the decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in favor of an intensification of atheist activity



made as far back as 1944 and implemented now because, as the Party magazine *Bolshevik* declared on June 15, "all sorts of prejudices and superstitions have revived among the people as a result of the neglect of propaganda." "Aggressive propaganda against religious ideology" was the mandate given communist lecturers by L. F. Ilyichev, an official of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Central Committee, as reported in *Pravda* on June 6. The schools must be made a chief arena of this activity, according to directions supplied in the June 11 issue of *Uchitelskaya Gazeta*, the Soviet teachers' newspaper. It is groundless—the London *Tablet* quotes the author, Goncharov, as asserting—to expect that "all kinds of superstitions, including religious ones, will be overcome without deliberate educative efforts on the part of teachers." Subversion of the schools goes on, according to plan, in all Soviet-dominated countries, as the heroic resistance of Cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary and the recent pastoral letter of the Polish bishops make clear. No protest was issued by the "religious Cominform" of the Pan-Orthodox Churches as the Conference closed with the singing of a solemn liturgy at the historic Monastery of Troitsa-Sergeyevyevy Abbey, near Moscow, on July 18.

Possibly the fact that the new anti-religious campaign is directed at the lower clergy exclusively may partially explain the silence. The New York *Times*' correspondent, C. L. Sulzberger, reported so in early April, adding that village priests who manifested their lack of complete

agreement with the Patriarchate were threatened with government action. The December *Young Bolshevik* states:

With the triumph of socialism the social roots of religion have been torn up, but religious convictions still persist among the uneducated country people. Although they are scattered and few in number, they will not disappear automatically, because in the country districts the religious leaders strive to consolidate their influence over the most backward people, especially the young who are immature politically. The movement of our society towards communism demands the intensifying of the battle against all vestiges of bourgeois ideology, including superstitions and religious prejudices.

Exempted from such vulgar attacks is the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church, hierophants of the World Revolution, faithful spokesmen of the "God-sent Leader, Stalin." Perhaps that is why the correspondent for Religious News Service could conclude his dispatch on the Pan-Orthodox Conference, celebrating the 500th anniversary of the independence of the Moscow Patriarchate, with the observation:

During their stay in Moscow, the visiting churchmen rode about in new ZIS luxury automobiles. The cars, which resemble Cadillacs, were made at the Stalin automobile plant.

The correspondent also reported: "The Orthodox leaders decided not to approach the Roman Catholic Church, which they said was incompatible and hostile." He did not indicate—nor did the Conference delegates—with what it was incompatible.

Portland's school for teen-age speeders

Dorothy L. McGinley

Dorothy L. McGinley is secretary to the Director of the Portland (Oregon) Traffic Safety Commission. The figures used in her article are taken from National Safety Council bulletins and from the records of the Statistical Division of the Portland Police Bureau.

The time is 7 P.M., the scene the dining-room of the Jacksons' home in Anytown, U.S.A. Mr. Jackson and Junior are in the middle of a debate on that perennial subject: "Who gets the car tonight?"

Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, like fathers and mothers all over America, worry when Junior drives the car. And well they may. For increasing numbers of juveniles are everywhere speeding to injury and death on our streets and highways. The National Safety Council estimates that about one million persons of high-school age take up driving each year. The Council's figures also show that these teen-agers are responsible for five times as many fatal accidents on a mileage basis as drivers forty-five to fifty years of age.

Jackson Jr. is just sixteen. And the record for his particular age-group is the most shocking of all. You may be amazed at the fact, but that group kills *eleven times* more people in traffic than the forty-five-to-fifty age group.

Junior wheedles his father's permission to use the family car, and we next pick him up speeding down the boulevard at sixty miles an hour. The menacing wail of

a police siren interrupts his plans to "open her up to see what she'll do." Speedball Jackson pulls over to the curb.

Here is where Jackson runs into a piece of good luck. It sounds queer, doesn't it, to say "good luck" when a boy is about to be arrested? But young Jackson was lucky to be arrested *before* the accident that was just about to happen, and lucky to be arrested in Portland, Oregon; for the ticket the officer hands him enrolls him in a training course in the city's Juvenile Traffic Violators' School. There he learns some vital facts about handling an automobile safely.

Portland's Juvenile Traffic School was established in October, 1945 to cut the traffic toll in this defense center. Portland's youngsters, like teen-agers all over America, had been earning big money in war plants and were spending it on "hot rods." Since induction into the armed forces was looming on the horizon for many of them, their parents hesitated to curb their "good times."

A review of all accidents in the city in which teen-agers were involved proved that Portland's young drivers were violating traffic regulations because they had never learned to drive properly. In 1945, in less than one

month's time, Portland's hot-rod drivers were involved in four fatal accidents in the city. Investigating officers listed "speed" as the primary cause of accident in each case.

Portland's record of youthful speed violators is not unique. From coast to coast, teen-agers speed to injury and death on our streets and highways. National accident statistics show that drivers in the 18-24 age group were involved in one-fourth of all fatal accidents last year in the United States, although the total number of drivers from 18 to 24 is less than twenty per cent of the total of drivers of all ages. The sad part of the story is that the record for 1947 is even blacker than for 1946! These same young drivers were involved in almost 62,000 more non-fatal accidents last year than the year before. Unlike Jackson Jr., they learned their traffic lessons the hard way.

Let us go back to school with Junior while he learns his traffic ABC's. Saturday morning at nine, he reports to police headquarters for an interview with Tom Simmons, Juvenile Traffic Officer. During the course of this interview Simmons decides whether his "pupil" has made an honest mistake or has deliberately disregarded the rights of others. If the boy's attitude is good, he can be shown that his poor driving habits endanger others, and he can be impressed with the fact that reckless drivers often die—worse, they often maim or kill others.

If the offense is a serious one, the offender is asked to surrender his driver's license. This is quite a jolt to Junior and Jim and Jane. They would rather lose their right arms.

Speeding ranks first among the serious violations. What makes these youthful drivers step on the gas? Tom Simmons hears a variety of explanations.

Joe Brown was picked up for doing sixty-five miles an hour on a main thoroughfare. He had just had a fight with his girl and he was mad at her and the world in general. The madder he got the harder he stepped on the gas. So the following Saturday morning Joe attended traffic school and saw movies of actual accidents caused by speeding. Next he got a thorough briefing on traffic laws and the reasons behind them. By the time the session was over, Joe realized that racing along a city street at a mile a minute is not the safest way to work off a grouch. He, too, was asked to surrender his driver's license. That clinched the argument for Joe Brown in favor of safe driving.

Pete, another student, was doing acrobatics with his old jalopy in the vicinity of one of the high schools. Pete was too small for football; he was no good at baseball; so he decided to impress the gang by showing them how he could "stop on a dime," go around the corner on two wheels, etc. The traffic officer patrolling the district thought Pete could profit from a course in traffic school. Down at the police station on Saturday morning Officer Simmons showed understanding of Pete's behavior and offered to teach him jiu-jitsu, a much safer way of impressing the gang. After a few workouts in the police gym and a little cramming on traffic laws, Pete was a changed character, both muscle-wise and traffic-wise.

Boys are not the only offenders. A bobby-soxer was clocked at 72 miles an hour in a 25-mile zone. Two sessions in traffic school changed her viewpoint, too. When she came home she handed her car keys to her father with a shamefaced grin: "Here, Pop, I won't be using these for a while!" Pop grinned, too. He was grateful that his daughter had learned about reckless driving in the traffic school rather than through suffering in some hospital ward.

The two-session course covers traffic laws and the reasons behind them, along with a demonstration of psychophysical testing equipment. During the second session each student takes the brake-reaction test which proves to even the most skeptical that he can't "stop on a dime." Using a wood model of a brake pedal and accelerator wired to an electric stop-clock, the officer tests the student's reaction-time. A red light on the base of the clock flashes the danger signal, and the student slams on the brake. The instant the brake touches the floor board the hand of the clock registers the number of seconds that have elapsed since the boy first observed the danger signal, or, in other words, the length of time it took for the "stop" message to flash from his brain to his foot. This test is an eye-opener to most drivers, especially when it is followed up by cold facts on the distance a car travels from the instant the driver senses danger until the time he brings the car to a complete stop. If more adults realized this fact, there would be no line-up in traffic court of drivers who are charged with following too closely.

The next item on the agenda is the side-vision test. This indicates how far a driver can see to the left and right. If he rates high, it is unlikely he will be involved in an intersection accident. Night vision is also tested.

The idea behind the tests is to make the boy realize that even though he may be in A-1 physical condition and have quick reflexes, good eyesight, etc., he must nevertheless practise safe driving habits. If his reflexes are slower than average, he must use extra caution.

Does it pay to retrain juvenile traffic violators? The Portland Traffic Safety Commission, which sponsored the school; the city's traffic police; parents of teen-age drivers and even the youngsters themselves, all say "Yes!"

Figures of the Police Traffic Division show that 1,247 juveniles were cited for violations during 1947. This represents a 26-per-cent decrease from 1946, when 1,662 were cited; and a 41-per-cent decrease under 1945, when 2,111 were cited. Reported accidents chargeable to juveniles dropped from 815 in 1946 to 675 in 1947.

Junior Jackson's story had a happy ending. But in thousands of American homes the story has ended in tragedy. Last year 32,500 Americans were killed in traffic accidents. Drivers up to the age of 24 were responsible for more than 28 per cent of these fatalities—over 9,100 deaths!

Unless all potential drivers are trained properly, preferably through a regular high-school course, police departments will have to retrain violators. In the meantime, young drivers commit mass murder and suicide on the nation's highways.

Literature & Art

Dublin letter

In our daily newspapers for July 17 there appeared a photograph which to many in Ireland may well have seemed particularly significant. It was a group taken at a reception given to Colonel Robert Rutherford McCormick, proprietor of the *Chicago Tribune*. The group included Mr. De Valera; Mr. McBride, Minister for External Affairs; Colonel McCormick; and Mr. Costello, Taoiseach or Prime Minister of the new government—in *that order*. It may have been wishful thinking, but many did think this a sign of the beginning of a better feeling between the members of the late ministry and the men of the present administration.

There may have been others who, like the present writer, saw in the group a deeper, perhaps a symbolic, significance—Irish America standing between contending parties in the Old Country and on friendly relations with both of them. Would that it were so. But too often in the past, if they will suffer me to say it, Irish Americans have taken sides violently in our domestic quarrels which they could hardly be expected to understand, much less judge. Now, at all events, whatever about the past, they may put out of their heads the notion that there exists in Ireland (apart from those six counties) any parliamentary party, however small, which stands for the interests of any foreign country. For no such party exists.

Politics no doubt have their importance, but there are in Ireland things more important than politics, to mention only religion, education and culture (in the broadest sense), our ancient language and literary heritage, and the terrible problem, which politicians have done so little to solve, of the wholesale emigration of our young people to Great Britain, a problem which, I venture to say, is only in a slight degree economic, and the consequences of which are worse than many an economic disaster.

I write as just one who has suffered from the apparent indifference of Irish Americans to some of these things.

And so I propose in these letters to deal little if at all with matters political, and not at all with party politics. Rather shall it be my endeavor, though I do not wish to tie my hands at the outset, to deal with matters of general cultural interest.

It may be of interest to American Catholics to chronicle here the recent foundation of the Catholic Writers' Association. For about two years previously the project had been under discussion. Its constitution and its statement of aims are the outcome of these discussions. The Association is not an academy (which implies an élite) nor a trades union, which would confine itself to questions of "royalties" and conditions. Its membership is open to all Catholics engaged in literary work—editors,

publishers, journalists and other writers. As the Association takes no responsibility for the writings of its members, their liberty of expression is complete; though it is open to the Council of the Association, if it thinks good, to dissociate itself from some statement by a member. The aims may be summed up as an effort to promote mutual acquaintance and friendly fellowship among writers, etc.; to help in maintaining and developing a Catholic mentality and outlook in the Catholic public; to encourage and help young writers; to initiate and maintain friendly relations with similar organizations in other countries, notably the Catholic Writers Movement of New Zealand and the International Federation of Catholic Writers directed by M. Jacques Hérissay from Paris, and still in process of formation.

STEPHEN J. BROWN

London letter

THE HEART OF THE MATTER. Mr. Graham Greene's best-selling new novel has been the cause of much discussion and correspondence in the Catholic newspapers. Aspects of economics and politics, the atom bomb, peace or war, the conversion of England, are "constants" in the correspondence columns of the Catholic weeklies; but no question regarding the arts has caused so much controversy since the removal of the monkey from the Eric Gill altar-piece in Westminster Cathedral—referred to in my "London letter" at the beginning of last year.

Mr. Evelyn Waugh reviewed *The Heart of the Matter* in the *Tablet*. As he is himself a novelist of the first rank, his review has especial interest. He draws attention, rightly I think, to Mr. Greene's attitude to the use of the language:

... the style of writing is grim. It is not a specifically literary style at all. The words are functional, devoid of sensuous attraction, of ancestry and of independent life. Literary stylists regard language as intrinsically precious, and its proper use as a worthy and pleasant task. A polyglot could read Mr. Greene, lay him aside, retain a sharp memory of all he said and yet, I think, entirely forget what tongue he was using. The words are simply mathematical signs for his thought. Moreover, no relation is established between writer and reader. The reader has not had a conversation with a third party such as he enjoys with Sterne or Thackeray. . . . It is as though, out of an infinite length of film, sequences had been cut which, assembled, comprise an experience which is the reader's alone, without any correspondence to the experience of the protagonists. The writer has become director and producer. Indeed, the affinity to the film is everywhere apparent.

Mr. Waugh then sketches the plot of the book and relates it to Mr. Greene's other novels:

Scobie is the complement of Pinkie. Both believe in damnation and believe themselves damned. Both die

in mortal sin as defined by moral theologians. The conclusion of the book is the reflection that no one knows the secrets of the human heart or the nature of God's mercy. It is improper to speculate on another's damnation.

The critic goes on to analyze what seems the "moral" of the book as expressed in the initial Péguy quotation: "*Le pécheur est au coeur même de chrétienté . . . nul n'est aussi compétent que le pécheur en matière de chrétienté. Nul, si ce n'est le saint.*" Mr. Waugh does not really see why the sinner—even a sinner who loves God—should be nearer to the heart of Christianity than the conventional churchgoer who tries to abstain from sin. And can a sinner love God so much that his love sanctifies his sins? That is the heart of the matter. Here, as Mr. Waugh says, "the literary critic must resign his judgment to the theologian."

But I personally do not think that this is a theologian's book. I think Mr. Greene is portraying a character, not making a case. Scobie behaved in his own way for his own motives. We can take him or leave him, sympathize with him or be exasperated by him, as we can take or leave Jane Eyre or Anna Karenina or any of our friends involved in a crisis of choice. Scobie's behavior and motives are all mixed up with his faith, because he was a Catholic. But the behavior of a Catholic is not necessarily the behavior of a theologian, and I think Mr. Greene must be surprised that his muddled hero has become the victim of such close, academic comment.

Among the priests who have come to the defense of this over-discussed book is Father Martindale, S.J. Answering a letter in the *Catholic Herald* which begins, "It seems incredible that any Catholic could approve of Graham Greene's book *The Heart of the Matter*; and even more incredible that it could have been written by a professed Catholic," he writes:

Clearly there are two views of the book, each seriously taken—that of those who dislike it; and that, for example, of those who chose it to be the Catholic Book of the Month in the U.S.A., or of an exceptionally holy priest, recently dead, to whom I had lent my copy, and who had no words strong enough to express his admiration for its piercing insight into human nature and its spirituality. . . . To me the book suggests, and it is meant to suggest, a profound conviction of the horror of sin and the miseries it brings about. . . . If Scobie is an "exceptional case" it is not because he sinned, but because his sins caused him such agonies. . . . It remains that if a man finds a book is doing him harm, he need not, and should not, go on reading it, whether it be the *Canticle*, or by St. Alphonsus, or by Mr. Greene. It does not follow that the book should not have been written.

Apart from letters in newspapers, this novel has been widely talked about. A friend of mine here in Oxford, where I am at the moment of writing, told me the other day that he has talked of little else for the past two months! With every fresh friend he meets, it comes up. And this can be said of very few books published in England just now.

BARBARA WALL

Books

Families: Brooklyn and Dublin versions

THE THREE BROTHERS

By Michael McLaverty. Macmillan. 213p. \$3

TOMORROW WILL BE BETTER

By Betty Smith. Harper. 274p. \$3

The difference between these two stories, each of which is primarily a character study and an oblique commentary on family life, is that the McLaverty book is successful in the credibility of all its characters and fundamentally sound in its concept of the family, whereas the Smith tale fails in all its characters save one or perhaps two, and is inadequate in its approach to the family.

Of the three brothers in the first novel only one is married, and even his family life is not all lavender and old lace—one son is irresponsible and dishonest, and minor troubles dog others

of his children; but he and his wife and their sons and daughters do nevertheless live a life that is filled with warmth and affection, and the father realizes that what sorrows he bears are "God's tether" that keeps him in bounds so that he may grow to real manhood.

Against this background are placed the other two brothers, D. J., the black sheep, playing the horses, scrounging from his relatives, bringing gossip and scandal to their names, but withal a somewhat lovable old scoundrel; and Bob, who has degenerated into a miserly and crusty shopkeeper. The loneliness and rootlessness of these two emphasize the richness in the life of the married brother. A minor plot of the romance between one of his daughters and a young man of Bob's village is charmingly done.

The pace is leisurely and the writing very beautiful, particularly, as is often to be found in Irish writers, when nature is described. This is truly a solidly craftsmanlike novel, glowing with a spirit of deep humanity which springs not least from the natural place religion finds in the lives of most of the characters.

In contrast, Miss Smith misses, or

perhaps just does not care to include, any balance to influences that tend to deaden or coarsen marriage. Margy, another tenement girl like Francie of *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, is raised in an atmosphere of bickering, nagging, penny-pinching, which is duplicated in the family of the young man she finally marries. She is an eager, well-meaning young bride, but her marriage, too, slithers into the same pitfalls, and at the end of the book we look ahead to her appearance in a continuation of the story, when she will be the embittered mother whose daughter, in turn, will start optimistically and end in dull monotony.

Miss Smith has failed badly in her sequel to the famous "Tree." This second book has not the verve, the courage, that animated the first; there is no character comparable to Francie's mother. In addition, though much of the dialog is a faithful transcript of utterly banal juvenile repartee, it makes deadly reading.

The impression left is that this is not a book Miss Smith felt any interior urge to write; it will sell, but both writing and selling will be by-products of the "Tree." HAROLD C. GARDINER

Heart of the African matter

THE NEW CONGO

By Tom Marvel. 395p. Duell. \$5

Much in the news these days is the little African kingdom of Ruanda-Urundi (some 20,000 square miles). The Trusteeship Council of the United Nations is discussing the Belgian Government's report upon the country's administration; magazines feature its high-jumping, aristocratic, seven-foot Batutsi natives. Most people who wish to go behind the mere recital of names and places will want to avail themselves of the very substantial wealth of information which *The New Congo* provides; not only about Ruanda-Urundi, but the entire vast tropical area around.

As the author remarks, the Belgian Congo is a much larger territory than most people imagine—possibly we are in the habit of conceiving it in terms of Belgium itself. It lies at the heart of Africa, in a literal, geographical sense; and in another sense it is very much at the core of African affairs. In the Belgian Congo a whole series of remarkable evolutions are taking place: rapid industrial progress in mines and agriculture, a far-reaching cultural evolution of the immensely varied native peo-

ples; and, finally, a deep spiritual evolution—or rather revolution—through the great work of the missions, to which Mr. Marvel renders a fine and thoughtful tribute. Father Colen, S.J., Rector of the Grand Séminaire for native priests at Mayidi, says to the author:

I don't believe that you must necessarily go slowly with the evolution of the native. It all depends on the individual; if you find an apt pupil, no matter how dark his skin is, he can absorb all that a white youth can, and as quickly. Look around you! You have the proof right here!

The New Congo presents in colorful and attractive form the history, the geography, the development and the meaning of the Belgian Congo. It is frank and does not avoid the issues; and closes with this sage observation:

It becomes the responsibility of all whites: missionaries, administrators, educators, doctors, lawyers, engineers and businessmen, to build up a new sense of confidence, of security, of *belonging*, which the "evolved" native must have for the role which he is to play in the new Congo. Without it he can evolve no further.

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Heroism in Holland

ROLL BACK THE SEA

By Den Doolaard. Simon and Schuster. 435p. \$2.95

Years ago—the number will vary—we listened enchanted to the heroic story of the little Dutch boy, Peter, who thrust his arm in the leak in the dike and so saved the whole land. That story was told in a poem; Peter was just a boy; the leak was small, but he knew:

A leak in the dike! The stoutest heart

Grows faint that cry to hear,
And the bravest man in all the land

Turns white with mortal fear.

Roll Back the Sea is a novel; Peter has become an engineer, and there are four tremendous leaks that he has to plug. It is "The Leak in the Dike" grown up, so to speak.

In 1944 the "stout hearts" of Walcheren had double reason to "grow faint." The British, in order to rout the Germans who barred the way to Antwerp, bombed the dikes on the island of Walcheren, which lies below sea level, drowning the island and causing grim hardship for its 40,000 inhabitants. There is no concern here with the strategy or the ethics involved in the bombing of Walcheren; there is no propaganda. This is simply the story of the fifteen-month battle against time, against storm, tide and flood, and against the human factors that even in disaster will try to exploit human misery. It is the story of the miracle of engineering that closed the four breaks in the Walcheren dikes.

The author was himself a liaison officer between the Royal Engineers and the Dutch Government Department of Dike Repairs during the events which he describes so vividly in the pages of *Roll Back the Sea*. This is no mere "eye-witness" report; Mr. Doolaard has succeeded in putting the feel of the thing on paper with a fine eye for dramatic situation, an unsparing but compassionate insight into human weakness and heroism, and the terrifying, relentless threat of the sea.

When the water came, people moved from the ground floors of their homes to the top stories, and lived—for fifteen months—cooped up in one or two rooms, traveling when necessary by rowboat. But even in a rowboat, life was a race against the tide and against the storms. Women, "widowed" by husbands who during the ordeal were wedded to the job, lived continually bent over, with breaking backs and cal-

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loused hands, endlessly mopping up the interminable flow of water with as much success as if they were "bailing out the ocean with a teaspoon." And all the while the engineers waged their dogged war against the sea.

In the interplay of characters concerned in the rebuilding of the dikes one realizes that man's tragedies are not from God, as one might suppose when the natural elements are involved in a disaster, but arise from the greed, stupidity, hatreds and passions of men.

If the Dutch have always seemed dour, a little on the stubborn side, it is no wonder. When the ocean is their enemy, only a people of dogged powers of resistance and perseverance can hope to keep it in its place—behind the dikes. Even so, these people are not without humor; theirs is not a martyred expression. This is best revealed in the character of Thyse, the baker. The book is worth reading because of this character alone, if for nothing else. When the water came, Thyse went right on baking and, sailing up and down the villages in a rowboat, called his loaves, together with a cheerful remark for those customers who could wade out to him or lower a basket from the window.

American readers may find the experiences in this book too remote from their own daily living, but this fact might well enhance the charm of the story for them. But America has its van Hummels, its Bonkelaars, and even its Thysses and, while the experiences and problems are peculiarly Dutch, the values are universally human.

FORTUNATA CALIRI

THE PLAGUE

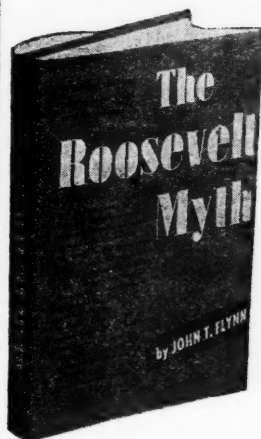
By Albert Camus. Knopf. 278p. \$3

What will spare many the horror of Camus' conclusions in this novel is its dullness. This book is unmarked by the drama and sustaining interest possessed by Camus' first, *The Stranger*, though it has for subject the effects of the advent of bubonic plague in the city of Oran in Algeria. Camus' purpose is obviously to work out his philosophy in terms of such a situation.

According to him, we are always in the grip of a plague—the plague is "natural," while "health, integrity, purity are unnatural products of the human will," of "a vigilance that must never falter." He tells of the weariness of the struggle against existence (the plague), and the indifference which man develops to what Saint Paul called this "constant jeopardy," because there

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is "no way of doing otherwise." He shows how, under the ever-present threat of death and destruction, man acts as if he "were free and had the power of choice," moving always from an overwhelming concept of God "toward some trivial objective that seems of more immediate interest," and resuming against the plague a dreary struggle which he knows is hopeless.

This is exactly the point of Camus' philosophical essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*: man rolls a great burden up the hill; he is thrust all the way down again and begins eternally afresh without hope, simply for the sake of beginning again. This is what Camus calls the great, the incontrovertible "absurdity" of existence.

Camus is not an Existentialist of the Sartre (atheistic) or of the Marcel (Christian) type. In fact, it is said that he does not wish to be confused with the Existentialists at all; for both atheistic and Christian Existentialists believe at least in man's chances for freedom in the midst of an apparent absurdity. The long, slow narrative of the physical and psychological effects of the plague and the weight of Camus' negative attitude make very lugubrious going.

EDWIN MORGAN

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The Word

PILLARS OF OUR FAITH

25. *Crucified*. You may talk glibly about conversions, juggle with figures perhaps not very reliable (says the Man in the Street); but on the whole you must confess that even in your mission fields the harvest is rather disappointing. We can find there hardly any signs of a tidal wave of conversions. The Church is marking time.

Do you think so (asks the Theologian)?

Yes. And, more than that; I think I also know the reason for this deadlock. You theologians, canonists and the like, you live in a world of your own, quite apart from the world in which your fellow countrymen are panting and struggling. Our problems are not touched in your theological books. You write lengthy treatises about the procession of the Holy Ghost, with plenty of abstract words. But, for us layfolk, all that science seems a little irrelevant. The first problem, before trying to convert people, is to converse with them. It is a problem of approach.

Undoubtedly. Conversions are the work of the Holy Ghost. We can only blaze the trail. We know that from St. Paul. But why do you think we have failed so completely in this task? To me it seems that theology is very much concerned with the problems of everyday life.

Indeed. Could you give an example?

I take just one, perhaps the most important and certainly all-pervading—namely: suffering. You must concede that suffering, in every shape, is woven into our very life. Theology knows that. It leaves to the doctors and the nurses the physical care of the sick, but it has something to say about the meaning of suffering. It can reconcile man even with the inescapable fact of death, and make him understand this grim "scandal."

Words! Words! Like a poultice on a wooden leg. You cannot explain away our suffering.

And I have not the least desire to do so. Leave that to the old philosophers. I take suffering as a fact, and a very bitter one. I won't minimize it. I won't say that, with a fair amount of cleverness, I can dodge it. I am ready to receive its full impact. But, as a theologian, drawing from the content of revelation, I make about it an amazing

statement: I say and I believe that God Himself has suffered. To you, steeped through education in Catholic doctrine, it seems perhaps just commonplace but, if you realize the implications of this dogma of our faith, you will see that it could shake the mountains and give the creeps to the stars. Since God has really suffered, I may become like Him, share His divine experience, not through the exercise of my intellect but simply through the reality of my suffering nature. I am no longer crushed and dashed to earth because I suffer; I can reconcile myself even with death, not in the dull fashion of the Positivists, because it seems to be the natural outcome of life, but because Christ, God, has passed through death. Suffering is no longer merely the law of all flesh; it may become the hard-won glory of partaking in the life of God. I am not alone when I suffer. Somebody, before me, went through the same trial, and this "Somebody" is my Maker and my Saviour. Suppose that when you read a book you are told that God has fingered the same page and read the same book. Suppose you could find some casual notes by Him written in pencil in the margin—would you be the same reader, yawning or absent-minded? To know that you share a divine experience would transform everything. Now, our faith teaches us that when we suffer, the same thing takes place. God knew by experience in His own body what hunger and thirst mean—and sadness, too, and derelictions. He has been tired, and beaten, and nailed to the Cross, bleeding in anguish, drinking the cup of pain to the dregs. From that time on suffering has been transformed, and the best approach when we try to convert people, as you say, is to make them understand the divine value of their sufferings. The Cross is the sign of Christians, and it is full of light and hope: *hominibus multum amabilis*.

PIERRE CHARLES, S.J.

Films

TAP ROOTS. When the South was enthusiastically planning to form the Confederacy, a group of Mississippians were projecting their own private secession with the intention of holding their valley as neutral territory. This little-known historical incident, so at variance with the solidly war-minded Southern temper, is ostensibly the basis

for *Tap Roots*. The lush, unmarred landscapes, (photographed for some reason in North Carolina) and an ante-bellum plantation house appropriately set the stage; and a rip-roaring, Technicolor blood-soaked battle sequence, in which the valley's defenders are routed by the caissons and cavalry of the Men in Grey, underlines the physical consequences of an experiment in counter-rebellion. All weightier considerations, such as how and why the decision not to fight was arrived at, or the fate of the survivors when their treasonable enterprise collapsed, are conveniently omitted. In their place, to the immense detriment of the film's claims to *adult* attention, is a full-scale recital of the personal peccadilloes of the Dabney family who ruled the valley, and whose eccentric and unmotivated behavior epitomizes the trashier aspects of post-*Gone with the Wind* historical fiction. Susan Hayward is the Scarlett O'Hara several times removed, and Van Heflin and Whitfield Connor are respectively the strong and the weak man in her life. (*Universal-International*)

SMART WOMAN. If it is true that there is nothing a housewife finds more relaxing after a session with a hot stove than watching an ultra-chic, ultra-desirable and abundantly clever movie heroine suffer and suffer, then *Smart Woman* deserves the title "a woman's picture." Its heroine (Constance Bennett), a materialistic Portia in a corruption-ridden city, keeps herself in ermines and penthouses by acting as a criminal mouthpiece, but behind her poised and brittle exterior is a heart filled with solicitude for her fatherless son. When a particularly flagrant breach of the law brings a special prosecutor to investigate, he turns out to be Brian Aherne, and suave, rich and unattached to boot. Even as the two are filing opposing briefs he is wooing her with orchids and champagne. This dream courtship is abruptly suspended when the chief gangster thereabouts (Barry Sullivan) who is also, it seems, the lady's ex-husband, goes on trial for his life. The outlook is black as our heroine, doubling as defense counsel and witness, bares her tragic past. If you are at all interested in finding out how this is happily resolved, go see it at your own risk. (*Allied Artists*)

THE PITFALL. This is a well-acted, swift-paced but lurid and rather far-fetched melodrama about a man whose

attempts to conceal a single act of infidelity ultimately lead to his becoming, technically, a murderer, and bring misery to all concerned. In order to bring about the homicidal turn of events it was necessary to inject two psychopathic characters into the story, thus reducing its relationship to common, human experience. None the less the picture's considerable claims to distinction lie in its ability to rise above these melodramatic twists. With an unaccustomed realism in the matter of sets, costumes and dialog, and very effective use of the camera, it captures

the feeling of everyday life. Against this background the mental conflict of the man (Dick Powell) torn by remorse, his sense of obligation to the girl who shares his guilt (Lisabeth Scott, in the closest thing to a good performance she has ever given), and his desire to protect his wife (Jane Wyatt) and son from scandal, takes on a dramatic validity for *adult* audiences which is further enhanced by a logical denouement and a soundness of moral judgment that is refreshing and unexpected. (*United Artists*)

MOIRA WALSH

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Theatre

PERFECT PITCH. The third-act curtain rises on a scene in which a father who has been pressured into doubting the paternity of his son is engaged in the business of comparing the child's features, knee-joints and cranial contour with his own, to the evident bewilderment of the youngster who, like many of our children, is considerably smarter than his dad. Between peering into the boy's eyes and squinting at his ear lobes, the harassed father refers to huge tomes on genetics and makes anxious phone calls to specialists on the subject, only to be more confused by the technical text of the former and the opinions of the latter. And he is thrown for another loss when an eccentric stranger appears and asserts that he is the lad's father.

Samuel and Bella Spewack, the authors, were obviously straining for laughs when they wrote the comedy; and they were richly rewarded by the second-night audience in the Montclair Theatre, in the town of the same name, one of the more civilized communities in our neighbor state, New Jersey. There were scattered snickerings during the first act, when most of the humor was border-line smut, loud laughs in the second act, when gag lines were succeeded by character comedy, while in the third act, when comedy of situation came into full bloom, the theatre was rocked by guffaws that ripped shirt fronts and split bustles. When I hurried out of the theatre, in haste to catch a late bus back to Manhattan, the actors were bowing to enthusiastic applause that seemed to be the beginning of an ovation.

How much of the applause was intended to express appreciation of writing skill, and how much for acting excellence, I wouldn't know. In my opinion the latter was more worthy of an ovation. The story, although I cannot remember where I have encountered it before, seemed trite and stage-

worn. A musical prodigy, aged six, becomes the most lucrative client of an impresario. The prodigy's success, in some way too involved for clarification in limited space, is the cause of an emotional triangle, with an off-stage woman coming between his parents. The outsider is defeated, of course, clearing the way for a happy ending.

Roland Young, starred in the production, is persuasively debonair, although a bit on the feline side for a man. But his performance is surpassed, or, as one might say, the star is out-starred by three of his satellites. Buddy Ebsen contributes an eloquent and flexible reading of the badgered father's role; Joyce Arling comes close to perfection as the prodigy's mamma; and Jonathan Marlowe is both natural and humorous as the prodigy. Jack Manning gives a capital performance as the impresario's dead-pan secretary, and Peter Lopouhin is amusing as a semi-Oriental serving man.

Credit for the set and light scheme, both of them adequate, belongs to William De Forest. Martin Manulis directed without letting his slips show; Albert H. Rosen is the producer.

According to rumor, the Montclair production of *Perfect Pitch* is part of its processing for Broadway. There the laughs will echo again—but you're warned.

THEOPHILUS LEWIS

Parade

A SPIRIT OF HELPFULNESS Towards others pervaded the week. . . . A New England judge gave joy to baseball-loving convicts by adding a year to the sentence of the prison team's ace pitcher who tried to escape from the club. The hurler had been jailed on a charge somewhat unusual for moundsmen—non-support. . . . Business executives manifested sympathy. . . . When a South Dakota veteran advertised: "Got a house? An apartment? A barn? Silo? Shed? Empty store window? Vacant attic? I'll live anywhere," officials of a department store allowed him to live for a week in a display window. . . . Radio authorities exhibited helpfulness towards the common man. . . . A Tokyo air program, called the Voice of the People, broadcast to Japanese a superior technique to be used in picking up cigarette butts. The Voice counseled: "1) Do not pick up butt while it is still lying by person who threw it away—especially if thrower is from

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over there [America]. Might have hand stepped on; 2) Do not stand around a gathering from over there as if waiting for them to throw away cigarette, as might not cooperate; 3) Make sure cigarette is out. Otherwise might burn pocket." . . . Concern for youth was demonstrated. . . . In Siam, to prevent youngsters from idolizing and imitating stage and screen stars, the Ministry of Education decreed that no schoolboy may wear his hair longer than four-tenths of an inch. . . . Efforts to safeguard the people's health were observed. . . . The Charleston, S.C., Health Department made it illegal for customers in bare feet to try on new shoes. The law is designed to prevent an epidemic of athlete's foot. . . . Steps to protect the public were taken. . . . In London, Eng., shoe-store proprietors issued a similar regulation. They asserted many would-be buyers in bare feet often ruin the shoes they try on. . . . Here and there, attempts to aid others ended unfortunately. . . . In Butte, Mont., a deputy sheriff suffered burns on his hand while demonstrating the safe handling of firecrackers to a group of youngsters. . . . Infants were encouraged. . . . In Hartford, Conn., a doctor told a convention: "Children have as much right to suck their thumbs as adults have to smoke cigarettes." . . . Officials showed consideration for the taxpayer. . . . In Springfield, N. J., a township treasurer recommended that his yearly salary be cut, explaining: "It is my personal opinion that my salary is rather high."

Ultior motives may beget something that passes externally for the spirit of helpfulness. . . . But the genuine article flows only from real charity, to wit, the love of God and the love of men because they are sons of God. . . . Charity has raised multitudes to Heaven, and drawn angels to earth. . . . God sometimes may help those who help themselves. . . . God always helps those who help others. JOHN A. TOOMEY

REV. STEPHEN J. BROWN, S.J., who begins this week to send in at frequent intervals the "Dublin Letter," is one of the leaders in Catholic librarianship in Ireland. He has been for years director of the Central Catholic Library in Dublin, and is an authority in the field of bibliography. He replaces Miss Kathleen O'Brennan as author of "Dublin Letter" after her untimely death.

Wages in Spain

EDITOR: To realize the true value of the family wage in Spain, as presented by Father William H. Feeney (AMERICA, July 10), the worker's regular wage must be emphasized.

Father Joaquín Aspiazu, S.J., Editor of *Fomento Social* of Madrid, refers to this problem in his issue of October-December, 1947 with these words: "The question is a crucial one, because it goes to the heart of the situation in Spain today."

After pointing out that wages have risen from seventy to eighty per cent, "including all bonuses and extras (even the family subsidy)" he states that "living expenses have risen from 700 to 800 per cent, and points out that "rationed articles represent only ten to twenty per cent of the family's needs."

It may therefore clearly be seen that workers in Spain do not now make enough normally to satisfy the basic needs. Under these circumstances, when a family with six children, for example, receives a subsidy of 160 pesetas a month (roughly equal to \$5 in the U. S.), one can understand what benefit the government-organized family wage means to the worker in actual practice. Unfortunately for Christian principles, official propaganda for the family wage appears to the worker as an empty mockery concealing a basic injustice. ANTONIO DE IRALA

Basque Delegate to the U. S. A.
New York, N. Y.

EDITOR: In my article, "The family wage in Spain" (AMERICA, July 10), I stated: "The rural branch of the subsidy has had a phenomenal growth, distributing a total of 636,183,704 pesetas among 8,695,520 beneficiaries." I should have said "among 26,798,147 beneficiaries." These figures represent the grand totals. The monthly averages are: 53,015,308 pesetas among 2,233,179 beneficiaries. This gives us about \$2.11 per child per month.

The figures given for sea workers represent the grand totals for the year. The monthly average of pesetas distributed is 950,910, and of beneficiaries 43,947. This gives an average of about \$1.95 per child per month.

WILLIAM H. FEENEY, S.J.
Jamaica, B.W.I.

Gatherings

Praise for Father Gardiner's review of Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter* (AMERICA, July 17, 1948) comes from Gerard Yates, S.J., of Georgetown: "I liked the mature, urbane insight of your essay." Resistance to "the surge of secular scientism" is asked by GEORGE J. BARR of Chicago, who adverts to the remarks of Bishop Hoban of Cleveland and the announced construction of thirty-eight hospitals at a cost of \$44 million over the next ten years. Equipment and organization are important, but a ponderous bureaucracy, an inefficiently rigid routine, impersonal treatment of the patient and failure to establish a fraternal relationship between doctor and nurse are dangers, he observes. . . . A scholar of international repute in the field of early Christian studies and comparative religion, Erik Peterson, needs funds to support his wife and five children so that he may return to his proper scholarly pursuits. Address: Via S. Anselmo 7, Rome. . . . FATHER LAURENCE KENNY, S.J., veteran history professor at St. Louis University, sends us an interesting quote from Zwierlein's *Life of Bishop McQuaid* anent the religious garb furor in North Dakota. Writing from Italy on December 5, 1900, to Mother Agnes in Rochester, N. Y., the Bishop reports: "Higher education and school methods are common talk here today. We hope soon to visit the Marcelline nuns here in Rome, preparing for teachers' certificates at the State University, exchanging their religious garb for a secular dress when at the university." . . . "Having fulfilled the painful duty" of informing us that our comment on Spain (July 3) is "against truth, justice and charity," FATHER PASCUAL GIBERT of Barcelona declares that he will write to us no more. . . . BROTHER XAVIERUS, C.F.X., Director of Sacred Heart Novitiate, Fort Monroe, Va., tells us that he answered an appeal a year ago to forward his read copy of AMERICA to Rt. Rev. Msgr. T. Roch Agniswami, S.J., D.D., Bishop of Kottar (at Bishop's House, Nagercoil, S. Travancore, South India) and has learned from the bishop that he and his native clergy are badly in need of good spiritual books, pious pictures, medals, rosaries and religious articles.

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